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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 376
By Gilbert

A RESOLUTION to commend Peyton Manning, University of Tennessee quarterback, on the conclusion of a brilliant collegiate career.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is very proud to specially recognize outstanding athletes who are, more importantly, quality persons; and

WHEREAS, widely recognized and acknowledged for his quarterback skills, Peyton Manning has demonstrated tremendous productivity, leadership and character, both on and off the gridiron. He also has the all-too-rare quality of confidence in his own abilities and humility; and

WHEREAS, going back to his brilliant high school career, his outstanding leadership skills were strongly evident; a three-year starter for Newman High School, in New Orleans, Manning led his team to an excellent combined overall record of 34-5. His numerous honors as a star high school player included being selected as the Gatorade Circle of Champions National Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, after delighting ecstatic Tennessee fans by announcing his decision to play for the Big Orange, Peyton replaced injured starters Jerry Colquitt and Todd Helton his freshman year and masterfully guided the Volunteers to a fine 7-1 record in the remaining games, including a resounding 45-23 victory over Virginia Tech in the 1994 Gator Bowl. He was specially honored by being selected as the SEC Freshman of the Year; and

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WHEREAS, in his sophomore season, the Tennessee team beat Alabama by an incredible 41-14 margin, their first victory over the always highly regarded Tide in nine years; and

WHEREAS, other highlights of the 1995 season included a 20-14 win against Big Ten powerhouse Ohio State in the Citrus Bowl and selection to the coaches All-SEC first team; and

WHEREAS, 1996 was another banner year for Manning and the Volunteers with 10 victories and a second straight victory in the Citrus Bowl, an impressive 48-28 win over Northwestern; and

WHEREAS, after the 1996 season it was widely expected that he would forego his last year of eligibility and enter the National Football League draft; yet to the excited cheers of the Vol faithful, he stunned the sports world by staying at UT; and

WHEREAS, during the 1997 regular season, Tennessee beat Texas Tech 52-17, UCLA 30-24, Old Miss 31-14, Georgia 38-13, Alabama 38-21, South Carolina 22-7, Southern Mississippi 44-20, Arkansas 30-22, Kentucky 59-31 and Vanderbilt 17-10; and

WHEREAS, playing in Atlanta, the Eastern Division champion Vols won the coveted Southeastern Conference Championship, beating Western Division champion Auburn 30-29; and

WHEREAS, in an exciting textbook come-from-behind victory, the game-winning score came on a 73-yard scoring pass from Manning to Marcus Nash, with just over 11 minutes left in the game; and

WHEREAS, in the SEC title game Peyton had four touchdown passes, completing 12 of 18 passes; and

WHEREAS, the Vols also participated in the Orange Bowl and finished the season with a fine 11-2 record; and

WHEREAS, the Vols were ranked as the seventh best team in the nation in the final Associated Press and the eighth best team in the nation by the final *USA Today/ESPN* Top 25 poll; and

WHEREAS, during the 1997 regular season, Peyton threw 434 passes, with only nine interceptions; and

WHEREAS, he also compiled 3,446 yards passing and 32 touchdowns, both school records; and

WHEREAS, another revealing statistic is how Peyton fared against the five toughest regular season defenses he faced during the 1997 season, Southern Mississippi, Florida, UCLA, Ole Miss and Georgia, each of which was highly regarded and ranked in the top 40 nationally against the pass. Against these national powers, he completed a phenomenal 148 of 237 passes (62.4%) for 1,760 yards and 15 touchdowns, with only five interceptions; and

WHEREAS, by a close margin, Peyton Manning finished runner-up in the voting for the 1997 season Heisman Trophy. Typically, although disappointed, he expressed no bitterness, yet again setting a superb example; and

WHEREAS, this superlative quarterback won the prestigious Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award, given to the nation's top senior quarterback by the Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Educational Foundation, Inc. and the Kentucky Chapter of the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Peyton won the Maxwell Award, given annually to college football's most outstanding player and was chosen *Football News' Offensive Player of the Year* ; and

WHEREAS, he was recognized as an Associated Press first team All-American; and

WHEREAS, one of the most important statistics for a quarterback is how well he takes care of the ball. Manning has done that in superb fashion. His excellent 2.31% career interception rate (31 in 1,338 passes) is the best in NCAA history; and

WHEREAS, Peyton was also honored as the Southeastern Conference Player of the Year; and

WHEREAS, in his college career, Peyton Manning led the Vols to 39 victories in his 44 career starts; and

WHEREAS, he set 19 school records, including career passing marks for touchdown passes, passing yardage, pass completions, attempts, completion percentage, and most yards; season passing marks for most attempts, most completions, completion percentage, most yards gained, lowest interception percentage; game passing marks for most completions and yards gained; consecutive games without a pass interception; and total offense marks for most yards (career), most plays (season), most plays (game), most yards (season), and most yards (game); and

WHEREAS, Peyton's 39 SEC wins are more than any other quarterback in conference history, including such legendary stars as Y. A. Tittle, Bart Starr, Fran Tarkington, Joe Namath, Pat Sullivan, and Ken Stabler; and his 17 career 300-yard games is an SEC record; and

WHEREAS, a member of Lambda Pi Eta honor society, Peyton graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Speech Communications, and compiled an enviable 3.61 Grade Point Average, and

WHEREAS, he was selected the 1997 Honda Scholar-Athlete, National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Scholar-Athlete and Burger King Scholar-Athlete; and

WHEREAS, he was appropriately honored by the University of Tennessee and the city of Knoxville by having a street near Neyland Stadium named "Peyton Manning Drive" in his honor; and

WHEREAS, University of Tennessee head coach Phil Fulmer paid tribute to Manning by stating "He's raised everybody's play around him to another level because of his competitive spirit, ability and leadership. He's been a difference maker for a number of years. That kind of

accomplishment says a lot for the program as well as the player. You had a great player that fit a really good system. He took the system and used it as well as it's ever been used.”; and

WHEREAS, Peyton Manning is a “Volunteer” in the finest tradition of the “Volunteer State”, having generously contributed his time and energy to countless civic causes, especially to our youth, serving as a role model to young persons at a crucial point in their lives; and

WHEREAS, a native of New Orleans, Peyton is the son of proud parents, Archie Manning, former star University of Mississippi and New Orleans Saints quarterback and Olivia Manning, who taught each of their children strong moral values, the importance of fairness, to be competitive on the football field and in life, and to have compassion for others; and

WHEREAS, Peyton has been strongly encouraged and supported by his two brothers, Cooper and Eli, and his grandparents, Sis Manning, and Cooper and Frances Williams; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause to honor and commend Peyton Manning, recognizing his tremendous contributions to the University of Tennessee Volunteer athletic program, the state of Tennessee and collegiate football; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we congratulate Peyton Manning for his many outstanding accomplishments and extend to him our best wishes for a successful NFL career.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.